

A Summary to

Reification, Thingification and Alienation in Marx's *Capital*

--- Basic Categories of Marx's Materialism ---

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Firstly, the author shows a conceptual difference of *Sache* and *Ding* as economic categories in Marx's *Capital*. Based upon the difference between both categories, the author distinguishes reification (*Versachlichung*) from thingification (*Verdinglichung*) in a following way: By reification Marx understands the transformation of the social relations of persons to persons into those of things to things, which stands for the reversal of persons to things on a dimension of social relations. On the other hand, he understands by thingification the second, further reversal of the social relations of things to properties of things, which are called 'socio- natural properties.' As a bearer of socio- natural properties a thing (*Sache*) becomes a thing (*Ding*). Thus, thingification can be defined as the reversal of *Sache* to *Ding*. Therefore, Marx's theory on reification consists of two elements: reification and thingification.

Current studies on Marx have reduced the problems concerning thingification to those concerning fetishism as a sort of perverted consciousness. To the contrary, the author demonstrates that Marx lays the foundation of 'production forces of capital' by applying thingification as an analytical tool; by introducing a category of the 'real subsumption of labor under capital,' Marx emphasizes that capital not only functions as a production relation as such that enables capitalists to exploit laborers but also as a special sort of the coalescence of the capitalist production relations with production forces into 'production forces of capital' or 'productive forces unique to the capitalist mode of production' which enables capital to create sciences appropriate to capital and to cause an uninterrupted revolution in the capitalist production process by applying sciences in a systematic-technological way. In this sense, modern sciences and technologies must be characterized as thingified capital. As such thingified capital, they threaten to the safety of the metabolic balance between men and nature.

Lastly, the author considers the relation of the theory on alienation to that on reification- thingification. Considering the use of alienation as an economic category in *Capital* and *economic manuscripts* preparing it, the author firstly identifies alienated labor as an action or behavior of laborers relating itself to objective conditions of labor (means of production as well as of subsistence) as alien to itself. According to the ripe Marx, alienation as an economic category plays an important role to reformulate the thingification of production relations in the form of labor's objective conditions in terms of the action of laborers by which they relate to their own labor as well as labor objects and products as alienated from themselves. Secondly, the author demonstrates that, even in *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, alienation refers to objects and products of labor as thingified production relations. Thus, alienation must be understood in the framework of reification-thingification, and consequently, must not be identified with the exploitation of laborers' surplus labor by capitalist as is very often the case in the current Marxian literature.